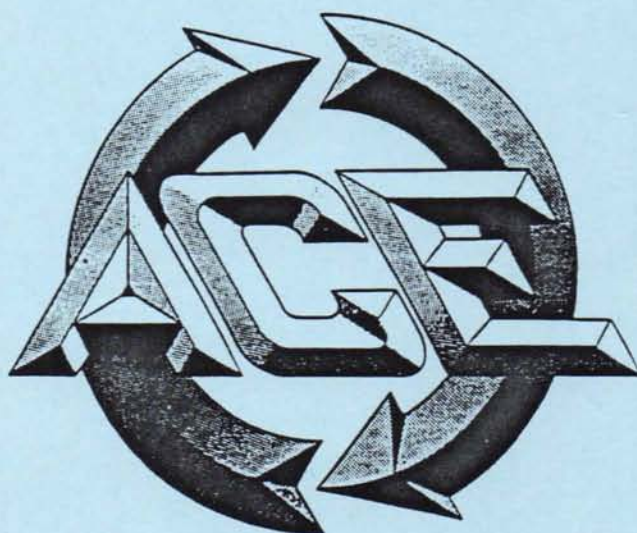


FEEDBACK

ADELAIDE ATARI COMPUTER CLUB

AN



GROUP

ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS

IN THIS ISSUE:

ATARI IN AUSTRALIA

CES REPORT

CEBIT REPORT

PSION CHESS REVIEW

The Adelaide Atari Computer Club (AACC) is an independent non-profit Users Group. We are an officially registered User Group with Atari Corporation, and a member of the WorldWide User Network (WUN). We are all Atari Computer Enthusiasts. Membership details may be obtained from the Secretary or at a meeting. All computer enthusiasts welcome.

Back issues of FEEDBACK are available as follows: Issues 1 - 7 (bound together) \$1.00 members, or \$1.50 non-members. Issue 8 onwards, 60c each, members, or \$1.00 each, non-members - plus post/packing if necessary.

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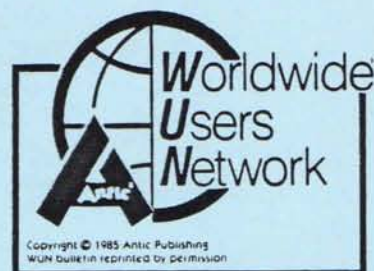
Meetings are held on the *First Monday* of each month (or *second* if the first clashes with a public holiday), at Gilles Street Primary School, City; and the *Third Monday* of each month at Modbury West Primary School (cnr Wright/Kelly Roads, Main Building).

ILLEGAL COPYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AT CLUB MEETINGS.

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This month sees the coming of age of Atari in Australia: an event that has been envisaged and looked forward to for many years. An Atari operation in Australia can only be seen as a positive move. Mobex was the first step towards this goal. Unfortunately, their progress was limited, resulting in the Australian Atari supporters becoming disenchanted.

At a recent presentation (summarised in the STOP PRESS), Atari pointed out that some of the difficulties, thought by many to be caused by a lack of response on the part of Mobex, were to a degree created by an absence of Atari support for Mobex. Despite this, Mobex continued its push to create dealerships and point-of-sales in Australia, whilst at the same time encouraging the local user groups, by such actions as supplying information, and in our case, the generous donation to the Club of a 520ST monochrome system. Accordingly, we think it is appropriate here to thank Mobex for their past efforts on our behalf.

From information given at the presentation, Atari seem sure to set the local computer scene on fire with their comprehensive product line-up and what we are told will be a vigorous future advertising campaign.

Regarding the writing of articles for Feedback. No matter how trivial you may feel your idea for an article may be, WRITE IT! No article will be too big or too small, and all will be gratefully accepted. Everyone has software and some hardware. Just a few lines (or many) on a particular aspect or theme of that software or hardware can constitute an article which will be read with interest by other members in the Club, as we make an effort to share our information. It would pay to give me a quick phone call though, about the article, just to check that someone else is not already writing one along the same lines. I have been told by several members that they would be willing to submit articles, but are not confident about the way in which to go about it. Relax, English does not have to be perfect; that's easily whipped into shape, and if you ring me, either Brian or myself will make suggestions regarding what points may be best covered in such an article and from which direction to approach it. Deadlines for articles are the 25th of each month, so you've got plenty of time between now and then to have a go.

THE EDITOR

THE PRESIDENT'S BYTE

Attendances at recent meetings have been encouraging and this is the first attempt by our new Editor of Feedback, so things were looking up even BEFORE the announcement. The week before it happened I had been talking with a member about the problems faced by Mobex and the marketing tactics of their opposition in Australia. I said that the only way any more could be done for Atari in Australia, would be for the parent corporation to become involved here, as they became involved in the United Kingdom. THEN IT HAPPENED! The details are still being sorted out, but Atari Australasia is under way, and by the time you read this, the first press releases will have appeared and representatives from your Committee will have been present at the launch in Adelaide.

I have been glad to see a number of decisions made by Mobex in recent times, but I've been far from happy with the incorrect information appearing in the popular press in Australia. This battle was not being won, indeed only with the biggest guns and the most enthusiastic support of every user can we hope to make a significant impact on computing in Australia. It will not be easy, it was never going to be easy, but we can now give a valiant account of ourselves.

We live in a society where democracy transfers some of the power from the bureaucracy to the consumers. So we have ourselves as consumers to blame for buying the wrong equipment, don't we? But of course it just isn't that simple. So many decisions are wrong because they are based on incorrect information, and as a Club one of our functions has to be to provide better information for our members, for Atari dealers, and for the whole community. I firmly believe that there are enough educated consumers in our community for Atari to win IT'S fair share of the market.

AN ATARI 520ST AT FREMONT HIGH SCHOOL

by Jason Bond

As many of you will know, I had the privilege of borrowing the Club's 520ST (kindly donated by Mobex, Atari) for two weeks. The ST spent most of these two weeks at Fremont High School, which has incorporated into the school, a special music branch. The idea was to show the music branch of the school just what the ST could do.

Monday morning came and the ST was taken to the school and set up by myself and a friend, in the Northern Area Education Piano Classroom. This classroom consists of thirteen electric pianos and one Roland MIDI piano. These pianos are used by music teachers from Fremont and many other schools. Accordingly, the ST was seen by more teachers than just those at Fremont.

For that week, the ST was in use whenever I could be there to help people use it. It was used by teachers from many different schools, and by students from Fremont. The ST was demo'd to people during lunchtimes, music lessons, and before and after school. All the people who saw it were amazed at what the ST could do; not only with regard to music, but all aspects of the machine.

On the Wednesday of that week, one of my friends at school was asked to provide synthesized music for a concert to be held at the school the following Friday. Because of the ST's fantastic capabilities, it was decided that it would be used at this concert as well.

That weekend, and the following week, was used sequencing rhythm and synthesizer music on the ST, ready for the concert on the Friday. Connected to the ST was the Roland MIDI piano; a Casio CZ-101; a Roland drum machine and a Yamaha DX-21. A Jupiter synthesizer was also used for accompaniment. Friday morning was spent setting up the equipment and doing odd touch-ups on one or two of the songs. All was ready on time.

The concert was upon us. Present were future students of the school, parents, teachers and other guests of the school. Numerous pamphlets and stickers made people aware that an Atari 520ST was being used to drive the group of synthesizers visible on the stage. The graphics demo's Spheres and Spheres II were displayed on two TV monitors while 'The Final Countdown' was played and the whole audience went quiet.

Numerous other songs were played by the ST and us, and at the conclusion of the concert the audience was told that the graphics demo's and synthesized music were controlled by the Atari 520ST - a machine with great music capabilities, especially when teamed with MIDI instruments. All in all it was a great success.

I would like to thank the Club for allowing me to borrow the ST for the two weeks it was used at the school.

There are now a few more people out there who are aware of the ST and ATARI.

NEXT MEETINGS

JULY 20TH MODBURY WEST

AUGUST 3RD GILLES ST

AUGUST 17TH MODBURY WEST

HARDWARE NOTES

A word of caution regarding the printer interface on your ATARI ST. Are you are in the habit of unplugging your printer from the ST with printer and ST turned on? If so, you run a high risk of damaging the printer interface in the ST and in some cases the printer, although this is less likely.

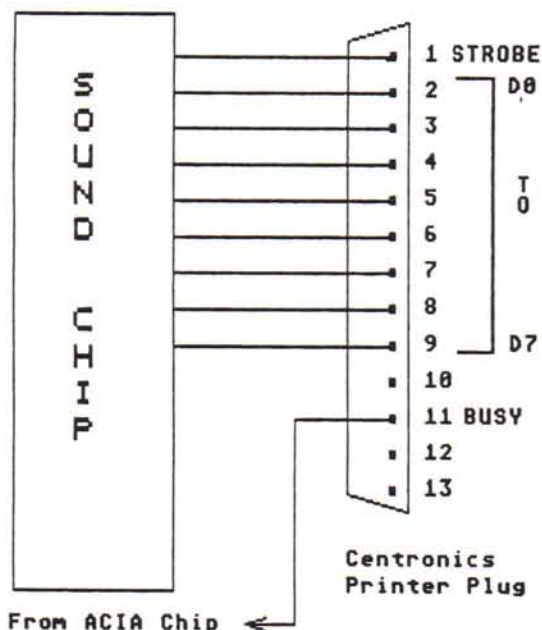
The printer interface is derived from the sound chip. A part of it serves as a PIA (Peripheral Interface Adapter) by using its two general purpose 8-bit I/O ports (input output ports). One port is used as an eight bit data bus to the printer's Centronic interface. Part of the other port is used to generate the printer strobe line. The lines from both ports are directly wired to the printer socket on the back of your ST. There is no high voltage buffering components between the printer socket and the sound chip outputs.

Usually when a plug is disconnected from two pieces of equipment that are switched on, a very short duration high voltage spike is produced. On the ST printer port the sound chip may be damaged by the high voltage generated. With buffer protected equipment this is usually not a problem.

You have probably removed the printer plug many times with the power on without experiencing any problems. You are playing Russian Roulette. At the current rate of \$40 to \$60 for evaluation of repair plus \$30 per hour labour plus parts, it could prove to be an expensive lesson.

The lack of high voltage buffering in no way reflects poorly on the ST design. The current trend of most manufacturers is to use custom made components with general buffering inbuilt as this leads to a more cost effective product.

Note direct connection from the
SOUND chip to the output socket



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DONALD DUCKS PLAYGROUND

O D D S & E N D S

Most of these jottings will refer to the Atari eight bit machines; not because they need to be dealt with separately, but because of the number of gaps in the information available elsewhere. Hopefully your new Editor will include the ANTIC download information elsewhere in FEEDBACK, but even then a number of other interesting items of information have been published.

In the April 1987 issue of ANTIC magazine, Reeve Software advertised two new 8-bit Desktop Publishing packages beyond those mentioned in the CES No.2 report. The names are Publishing Pro and News Station. Both packages should prove interesting. It will also be interesting to see if they pass muster as true Desktop Publishing programs. The world of 8-bit word processing already includes some of the best functional programmes on the market and both Reeve and X-lent have produced new packages even whilst knowing the class of the competition.

Speaking of X-lent, I am still wrestling with Typesetter and Rubber Stamp in what is very much a love-hate relationship. Both packages do some things superbly, but just when I think I have them mastered, they produce one of those annoying 'undocumented features' which come as such a shock when suddenly an hour's work is gone. Obviously I am doing my best to do the right thing by these packages because they really can work miracles. Exactly the same kind of 'undocumented feature' is liberally sprinkled throughout the IBM software I have to use at work, which costs thirty times the price I paid for the X-lent packages. I admit I have been spoilt by the consistently bug-free software available for the 8-bit Atari. It is easy to forget what others have to put up with and overlook the precarious balance between power and ease-of-use. I hope eventually to complete a review of both packages, but in the meantime, how about writing about the software you use, and passing the review to our new Editor?

That same issue contains news of a dazzling range of 8-bit hardware from ICD and all of these things and more don't come from where the action is. The 8-bit market in Great Britain, Holland and Germany is bubbling over with new software and hardware. Very few users understand the power of Atari Basic until they come to program in other Basics. I have commented before on the introduction of syntax checking to Basic for the MacIntosh(R) some 6 years after Atari introduced it. Now read the Newsletters in the club library for rave reviews on Turbo Basic. More power, more commands in less memory and dazzling speed as well. The price? It's free both in the interpreter and the compiler forms and the results are just starting to appear.

Daisy Dot Printer is a new 'free' program compiled from Turbo Basic which produces superb Near-Letter-Quality printing from ASCII files on any Graphics printer. All 8-bit owners should see the superb Dutch and German demonstration programs which are scattered around AACC's disks of the month.

With the establishment of Atari Australasia comes a decision to import the full line of Atari packages and while most are a little long in the tooth, the only limitation involved is a lack of frills. Age doesn't disqualify software and the characteristics of reliability and reasonable cost don't disappear. Before you conclude that first class software is unavailable ask other club members what they are using. No user needs 10,000 bad software packages, most only want about 50 packages and while there is some rubbish among the 3 to 4000 titles published for the 8-bit Ataris, the average quality beats almost any machine at any price. This statement applies particularly to Public Domain software.

During the month I had a call from Maureen who lives near Dunedin in New Zealand. She has been visiting friends in Adelaide. Maureen was interested in

finding out about the 8-bit software situation in Australia and wondered whether she should take software back to New Zealand with her at the end of her holiday. We exchanged a great deal of interesting information. Her family have a 130XE and a 600XL with a 1010 cassette recorder. In the nearby city of Dunedin (roughly a tenth of Adelaide's size), there are 3 dealers with good stocks of Atari software with an emphasis on cassette titles from England. The New Zealand price for a 1050 disk drive is \$500 (exactly the same price as Australia at current exchange rates), so I was able to encourage the purchase of a disk drive 'at home' with full warranty, to point out how little software was available right now in Adelaide and to express the hope that we will catch up with New Zealand in the near future.

Members and readers must understand that a few good disk titles are still available at the Computer Centre, but that the Software sources in Australia are in other states. Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland each have one good local dealer importing Atari software, but in most cases importing from overseas can save a little.

I have at present two cassette review packages from the UK from Creative Sparks Distribution with a suggested retail price of 1.99, (that's \$5 Aust- before tax). I mentioned German public domain software above, and I have a copy of the first issue of a French magazine called Pokey, listing software, but don't expect bargains from French or German publishers. Quality is the rule but it costs.

Apart from the great debates in American magazines, 'The 8-bit Atari lives' and 'Software Piracy'. There are a number of mail-order houses offering low cost software bargains that still make good-buying, duty paid. And finally we come to the new titles like Home Video Title Shop.

What is needed to persuade local dealers to sell software? The Club needs to be a source of software information. Tell us what software you use and what you like and hate about it. Tell dealers what titles are available but, above all, if you like a title, scrape up the cents and BUY it, and perhaps we can start bringing Adelaide up to Dunedin's standard.

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JUNE 1987 CES REPORT

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8-BIT UPDATE

Atari's 8-bit computer line is far from dead -- with a new double-speed, double-density 5 1/4 inch disk drive due this summer, as well as the 80-column box...plus the XE Game System that comes with 64K, a keyboard, a light gun and Flight Simulator II.

We'll start with the good news for 8-bit users. The XF551 disk drive is the big surprise. The 360K, double-sided double-density 5 1/4 inch disk drive runs 2.9 times faster than the Atari 1050 and is due in the stores this July, at a \$US199.95 list price. It's a compact 5 1/4 inch drive in XE gray, about 3/4 the size of the now-discontinued 1050 drive. The XF551 can automatically adapt itself to today's single density and enhanced density DOS disks. However, ADOS, the new QSS operating system coming with the XF551 includes a tree structure allowing subdirectories, easy switching between menus or keyboard commands, and a high degree of file recovery safety. Bill Wilkinson of QSS says that ADOS will run on any Atari compatible disk drive from the old 810 to a 16Mg hard disk. Although 8Mg is the upper limit for efficient operation, a larger hard disk can be partitioned into several logical drives. DOS 2 and 2.5 files can be read into ADOS, but ADOS is not fully compatible with the older operating systems. It seemed clear from talking to a number of Atari sources that a 3 1/2 inch disk drive for the 8-bit computers is now unlikely to be produced.

The same July arrival date holds true for the 80-column XEP80 display box (reviewed in the July '87 Antic). This product has been delayed by a wait for delivery of main chips, but all other components and packaging are stockpiled in readiness for assembly at Atari's Taiwan factory.

XE GAME SYSTEM

The first working pre-production prototypes of the XE Game System were on view atop the roof of Atari's large booth structure, along with a real Cessna airplane that Atari somehow got into the new CES North Hall. The Game System is essentially a two-piece 65XE computer that costs as much as a 130XE. But instead of 128K memory, you get a light-gun, a joystick and three games -- Flight Simulator II on cartridge, Missile Command in ROM and a pistol game called Bug Hunt. At least 18 arcade and disk best-sellers are now promised for Atari cartridge by Christmas, including 1 On 1, Gato, Midnight Magic, Karateka, Choplifter and Blue Max. Most titles are to sell for \$US19.95 each.

Atari Software Director John Skruch says the XE can get as much as 256K on a bank-switching cartridge. Flight Simulator II only required 128K. The system is designed to be sold in separate pieces overseas. Eventually the light-gun will be available in the USA as an 8-bit peripheral. An ST mouse will work on the XE Game System in trackball mode.

You'll be glad to know that Springboard has now started work on an 8-bit Atari version of Newsroom. Newsroom is a popular entry-level page layout program for easy newsletters.

Good news for Atari graphics users who have been trying to find a touch tablet. Suncom's Animation Station for XL/XE is now available. The included software provides many pre-drawn pictures as well as automatic shape generation. The tablet can be used in place of joysticks or paddles to control any standard Atari software, according to Suncom.

At Antic's suggestion, Suncom is now looking into converting their convenient keyboard-mounted joystick for use with the Atari 8-bit and ST.

Strategic Simulations Inc. had extra reason for celebrating at their suite, high above the Chicago River. Last week they signed a contract with TSR to start the first computer versions of the original Dungeons and Dragons games. You should be able to play D&D on your Atari by Christmas.

Datasoft, now being released through Electronic Arts, has two welcome 8-bit titles due out before July. Video Title Shop (\$US29.95) lets you create colorful animated sequences with graphics and moving text -- which can be transferred to your videorecorder tape via standard electronics cables. Video Title Shop includes the Micro-Painter Plus paint program and a library of built-in borders and screen images. Scrolling, position-changes, fadeouts and a whole range of video special effects are supported. A second disk of video "clip art" for the program will also be released this year.

Also from Datasoft at \$US29.95 is the second installment of Alternate Reality -- The Dungeon -- which seems to play much faster and more conveniently, with less disk swapping than the earlier installment of this large-scale graphics adventure game.

Most of the unreleased software on display at CES was promised for shipment by early summer. One of the few new packages I was actually able to bring back for review is...Virtuoso. This is the long-evolving music/graphics storyboard system that Antic previewed almost two years ago. The XL/XE version is \$US49.95 and the ST version is reportedly well along in development.

Marketing Communications director Neil Harris, explained that Atari's top priority at this particular CES was to revitalise the 8-bit line by packaging a redesigned 65XE as a high-end games system, in direct competition with Nintendo and Sega.

16-BIT UPDATE

A prototype of a 2/4Mb memory upgrade board has been developed by Micro D of Canada. The new thing about this board is that it should be able to be installed without any soldering. The board is supplied without the RAM chips. A 4-megabyte upgrade requires 32 chips and the 2Mb version takes 16. Approximate cost of this memory upgrade board (Data-Free Board) is \$US159.

Hybrid Arts have released an ADAP Soundtrack digital sampling system at \$US195. With this device sound can be sampled for example, off tape after which the sound can be manipulated in real time with a simple visual interface. The digitised sounds can be played back in reverse, cut and pasted, stretched, and faded etc. The sound quality of the digitised signal is comparable to a compact disk. There is an option to work in stereo with dual hardware.

3D Breakthrough is one of the first games to be released using the Stereotek 3D Glasses. This is a maze based game, requiring the player to shoot his way through various barriers. Also included on the disk is a version of the game that doesn't require the use of 3D glasses. This is a Shelbourne Software release, price unknown at this stage.

Towards the end of the CES we got our first look at some additional important ST software. Broderbund is jumping into the ST market place with Art Director and Film Director, a DEGAS-quality paint program that will be packaged together with an animation module for \$US79.95. This software, originally designed by Hungarians who did ST Battlezone, is expected to ship in August. Features include: rescale, stretch, distort, bend, bulge, spin, perspective, scroll and spin.

Not quite as far along is the ST version of Broderbund's all-time best

seller, Print Shop. It is due this autumn at \$US49.95 and will be similar to the sophisticated Mackintosh version. Also coming from Broderbund is the ST Karateka at \$US34.95.

Timeworks Desktop Publisher this autumn will join the Company's ST wordprocessor, spreadsheet and database software.

Spitfire 1940 is an ST flight combat game coming from Avalon Hill this summer.

Back at the Atari booth we got a look at Bentley Bear Goes to School, a new ST educational series programmed in Israel and featuring the lovable bruin from the Crystal Castle arcade game. Four titles for Grades R-6 are to be marketed within 30 days and there will eventually be some 20 in the series. The animation in each title such as Magical Mathematics, is of very high quality and the package will sell for \$US19.95 apiece.

This year, Atari Vice President, Leonard Tramiel revealed that a 16-bit graphics workstation is in a fairly advanced stage of development. This would be compatible with the ST, but much more powerful. He said that any 32-bit multi-tasking computer would need to run Unix, but it was a problem deciding which competing version of Unix would be best.

Marketing Communications Director Neil Harris stated that the ST Word Perfect, due in July runs 5 times faster than the best selling IBM version.

What looked like a very powerful and easy-handling 2-D drafting and drawing program was being demonstrated by Xetec of Salina, Kansas (makers of the Grafix AT which has been reviewed in Antic). SCAD gives you pages for 16 ST drawings in RAM. All commands can be operated from GEM or from the keyboard. The \$US99.95 program is due in September and will not be copy-protected. Page sizes can be defined as large as 32 X 32 inches and many powerful graphics editing tools are built-in. SCAD can convert images into DEGAS format.

A software team from Venezuela was showing MasterCAD 3-D, a \$199.95 program that converts any 2-D image into real 3-D and seems quite easy to operate. The current version requires 1Mb and monochrome. Final U.S. distribution is still being set.

Passport Designs, a leading MIDI software house, is rushing to convert its first ST product -- Master Tracks Pro, a high-powered, user-friendly 64-track sequencer that has been winning rave reviews on the Macintosh this spring. The Passport CES team told Antic that three out of four visitors to their booth wanted this product on the ST instead of the Mac.

Computereyes, a 1986 Antic Award Winner, is being shown at CES in an inexpensive \$US149.95 monochrome version (it can produce gray scales on the color monitor). This is the latest Atari video digitizer from Digital Vision. Their ST color unit will be reviewed in the August 1987 issue of Antic.

Another specialized new use for the ST is to run a graphics database for serious chessplayers. SciSys of London is showing two versions of ST ChessBase -- the software that current World Champion Garry Kasparov has been using to prepare himself for tournaments. With Chessbase Sr., every recent tournament game of an upcoming opponent can be fed into the database and instantly examined from a vast variety of viewpoints to pinpoint potential weak points of play. You can see how an opponent reacts to any standard style of opening or strategy. ChessBase Jr. works with the expensive Leonardo world-class chess computer and the ST. U.S. distribution for all these products was being finalized at CES.

An add-on to PrintMaster Plus, the Print Shop workalike from Unison World,

will be a Fonts and Borders disk. Price is not yet set.

GAME GALLERY Microprose had a customized Link Trainer "flying" on the CES floor as it was piloted with the new Gunship helicopter simulation. The ST version is still under development.

Mindscape showed two \$US29.95 ST color games designed in England. Q-Ball is a 3-D billiards game played inside a cube where you can adjust the gravity and line up your shots off any wall. Plutos is a shootout where your rocket flies over the scrolling surface of the huge enemy mothership and attempts to destroy it.

From England's Psygnosis, creators of the visually awesome graphic adventure game Brataccas, comes another lushly-detailed extravaganza. Barbarian moves a Conan-type hero through an a vast, scrolling underground kingdom -- color only -- where monsters and hordes of enemy guards must be overcome on every screen.

Electronic Arts is starting to crank out some ST titles too. An enhanced version of Music Construction Set -- with MIDI -- is due in July for \$US39.95. Other new features are direct waveform editing and a jukebox playback mode.

Electronic Arts has also taken over distribution of the First Byte talking ST software. First releases are MathTalk, a flashy arithmetic drill for youngsters, and a talking computer version of Mad Libs, the popular series of humor books where you add inappropriate words to prepared storylines. Still more from Electronic Arts, a kind of super-Diplomacy strategy game called Empire, where you conquer weaker parts of the world and force them to build weapons and raise new armies for your war machine. But your enemies are just as ruthless, and you can also start the game by re-drawing the map of the world to suit your own tastes.

Logical Design Works has a whole line of fast-moving ST gambling simulations for \$US34.95 each. Vegas Gambler combines blackjack, roulette, slot machine and poker machine. Other titles available are Vegas Craps and Club Backgammon.

From Canada Jagware is making its ST debut with Alien Fires, a color-only 3-D space maze arriving this summer.

By the way, Atari used the CES opening to announce that they had a 45% increase in first quarter sales this year -- \$65.1 million -- and they were making a 2-for-1 stock split. This news bumped up the price of Atari stock by about \$5, to over \$30 per share.

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INTELLIGENT CHESS! THE PSION IS WITH US

by RAYMOND KENNINGTON

At last! The PSION has appeared! The chess game PSION is the chess game of the year!

First Reactions

When I first booted up the PSION I thought, "Here is another of those chess games that either make very silly moves or take so long to move you die of boredom before you finish the game." So I rushed into my first game without considering any of the features of the game. "I'll give it the old Queen's Gambit, develop a strong centre, place a lot of stress on its king's side, bear down, make a few profitable swaps, push pawns to promotion, polish it off in 10 minutes, then put it into the disk case with my other chess games, wishing I had never seen PSION and got my hopes so high again." But, this is not what happened.

A 3-dimension view of a chess board appeared by itself on the screen, ready to play. It played fast and this lulled me into a false sense of security (thinking of all the other has-been computer chess games) and I played fast too. Then I realised that I was losing; I had lost command of the centre and it was bearing down on me. Every swap it made it seemed to gain in position and then in point value. I thought of attempting to draw the game, but alas, I didn't stand a chance. OK, so I lost a game. I'll beat it next time though! I'll use the same variation on it in the opening and then change a couple of moves in the middle game. This time I was stunned. I wasn't expecting it to actually respond differently this time.

It attacks and attacks and attacks. What usually appears a safe opening isn't an opening at all with the PSION! I rarely achieve what is usually considered an 'opening' in chess. The game seems to start in the middle-game and ends before the end-game.

Although I have not played competition chess for a number of years, I was a reasonable player with my last rating at around 1500 and I have in the distant past won lightning chess tournaments which included a state championship. Therefore I am surprised at the strength of the PSION.

I played and I played, but I didn't win once in the first 42 games. Then I won one. This was thrilling. The PSION really knows how to play chess and in a very short time. I had by now looked at the levels of play and saw that it was playing in 6-second mode. The game I won was against its 2-second mode.

PSION then, is a chess game worth having because of the standard alone. Let us now consider in detail, the options available to you.

General

The game conforms to all the rules of chess. That is, it includes all of the following. The board is set up correctly. Castling both sides is allowed

(although I have not yet tried to castle when in check nor through check). Not only does the PSION allow en passant capture but uses it to great advantage when required. Stalemates occur after 3 moves each have been repeated in succession or after 50 moves without the movement of a pawn or the capture of a piece. I don't know yet whether one can castle after having moved either the king or the rook, but I expect so. A choice of piece is given upon promotion of a pawn. In all the games I have played I have not seen a repeat of its openings or responses, so the variety is excellent.

The PSION likes to get control of the centre and has as its second priority a file on the queen's side. It is good at pushing pawns to successful promotion. On one occasion, though, it did not seem to take into consideration the possibility of me promoting a pawn to a queen in the end game of the second game which I won. It carried on with its own plan until it was too late. I might describe this game in another article.

The PSION has the ability to think while you are thinking and it takes advantage of this fact. You can turn this off if you want to, thus weakening it somewhat. Also, it predicts your move and if correct speeds up its response time. Both of these features help to speed up the game.

I'd like to make a short comment on other computer chess games and a simple comparison with them. I also have the PD chess game KRABAT SCHACH, version 0.0a which originated in Germany. I give it a rating of -1 as it doesn't adhere to the rules of the game. Although it has at least 26 levels, it is unplayable at level 2 because of the length of time it takes to move - it took more than 5 hours to respond to an opening of P-Q4. I also have HAMLET, which plays a reasonable game of chess but lacks the short response time and cleverness of PSION. Also, in one game against my mother, it reacted so strongly to one of her moves that it decided to play suicide and gave up all of its pieces in succession. So far, no quirks have appeared in the PSION.

One of the distinct advantages about the PSION is being able to use the mouse by clicking on the piece you wish to move, and then being able to release the mouse, move the piece and click the mouse again when the piece has been moved to its desired location.

Setting up

You can set up the PSION for B/W or colour. In order to print the chess board you have to choose the correct number of pixels per line that your printer has and NLQ or draft, etc.; these can be chosen from desk option of the main menu.

THE MENUS

PSION - Help is available from this pull-down menu - and very helpful it is! Also from this menu you select to change the language to any of the 6 languages: English, French, German, Italian, Spanish or Swedish.

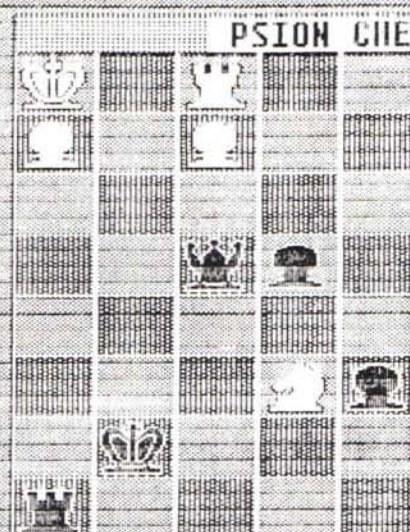
GAMES - New Game: starts a new game, even if one is already in progress; Open Game: reads a saved game off disk; Save game: saves a game onto disk to continue with or analyse later; Master Games: there is a collection of MASTER games which you can watch and analyse. (See the section below on replay.)

PLAYERS - Player vs ST; Player vs Player; ST vs ST.

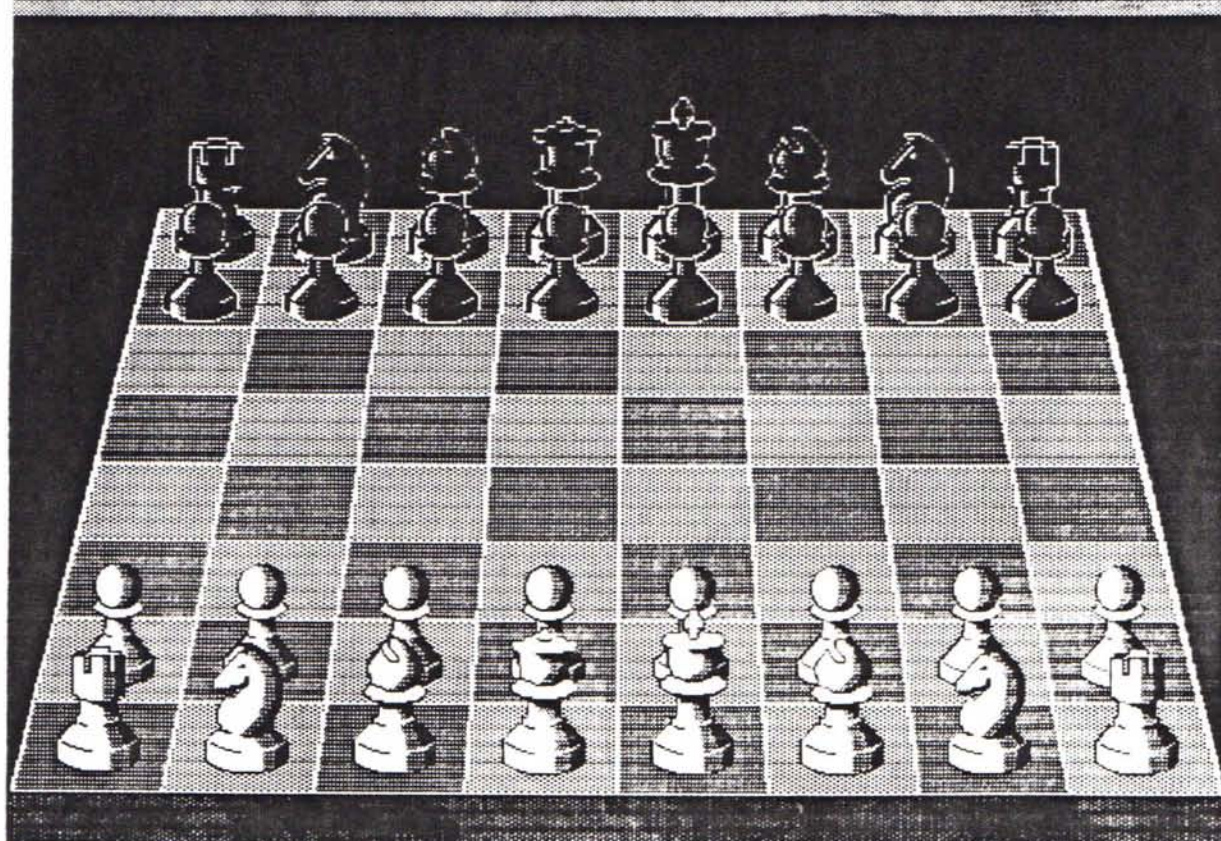
LEVELS - Novice level is for beginners and it plays worse if it is winning. The PSION plays so as to average a specified time per move, averaged out over 20 moves. Therefore it may play fast during the opening, and then slow, or a varying combination of them. You may specify the average time per move as 2,4,6,15,30,45 seconds, or, 1,1.5,2,3,4 minutes. This gives scope even for experts to have the PSION play good game of chess against them.

Desk Psion Games Players Levels Display Moves Feat

	ST	Player
	00:01:15	00:06:18
13	E4xC6+	B7xC6
14	C2-E4	C8-H3
15	E4xC6+	E8-F7
16	D2-C4	H3xG2
17	C1xF4	H6xF4
18	C4xD6+	C7xD6
19	G1xG2	F4-G4+
20	G2-H1	E5-E4
21	C6-B7+	F7-F6
22	F3-D4	G4-F4
23	B7xG7+	F6xG7
24	D4-E6+	



Desk Psion Games Players Levels Display Moves Feat



The equal time option has the PSION average its time so that in 20 moves it takes the same time as you. Infinite time allows the PSION to work on a move indefinitely and you must use the 'force move' option of the Moves menu in order to make it move.

DISPLAY - You can choose to play with a 2-dimensional board with pieces just like the ones used to analyse chess games in newspapers or magazines, or you may choose to play with 3-dimensional pieces which have the Staunton appearance. At first, I preferred 2-D, but now I prefer the 3-D board and pieces more.

In 2-D mode you can have the moves displayed or hidden. You can choose to display or hide the PSION's analysis; this shows a few moves ahead what it's thinking and what it predicts you will do. It also displays the value it assigns to the particular move; this enables you to gauge the degree to which it thinks it's winning or losing.

You can invert the board so as to be able to play black with the pieces at the bottom of the screen, rather than at the top. This is much appreciated.

MOVES - Hint: the PSION provides you with a hint if you request one. After I won my 3rd game against it I replayed it and asked for hints during the end-game. I didn't take them but observed that if I had, I would have lost badly. Perhaps this is because it does not analyse the player's move in the same way in which it analyses its own. A better way to get a hint is to change sides and change the level. When it has moved, swap sides and take the move back, giving you the option to play the hint or not. Take back: this allows you to analyse different variations and to be able to judge the merits of different manoeuvres. It is especially useful when used in conjunction with the MASTERS games or 'MATE IN ...' type games. (Note, however, that once you find yourself in a pickle with the PSION, you may find yourself trying all variations possible at various parts of the game and will arrive back at the start of the game - and then deciding that you need a new first move!)

Change sides: used in conjunction with Hints (see above) and also when you've decided you want to win for a change.

Offer Draw: only possible on your move and not immediately after you have taken back a move.

Replay: used to replay your own games or the MASTERS games. When you wish you had printed the first game you ever beat the PSION in, don't despair, for this can be done by choosing the 'Print moves' option of the Features menu and then replaying the game in automatic mode (described below).

Replay options: Start - starts the game; Automatic - sit back and watch the momentum build and the destruction which ensues. (Enables one to see the flow of the game. Particularly good with the MASTERS games.) Can be stopped with the Halt option; halt - halts the automatic replay; Forward - play one move in the game being replayed; Backward - play one move backward in the game being replayed; Exit - finish replaying a game.

Next best: orders the PSION to take back its last move and play the 2nd best move rather than the best; useful for finding alternative solutions to 'MATE IN ...' type problems.

Move now: used to force the computer to play the best move it has found so far. Allows you to go away for a while and have the PSION play at level infinity.

Best so far: causes the PSION to demonstrate the best move computed so far.

FEATURES - Set up the board: you can set up the board to be any configuration you like, but as I haven't done this yet I can't comment on whether or not it allows you to specify that a rook or king has moved, and therefore not allowing castling. More on this in the next article.

Enable resign: usually the PSION plays with the motto 'TENAX AD ASPERUM', i.e., it keeps battling to the bitter end. You can allow it to resign if you want to.

Stop clocks: allows you to adjourn the game.

Reset clocks: does what it suggests.

Sound off/on : I use the volume control on my monitor.

Print moves: either turn this option on before your first move or use it in conjunction with the replay option.


Print board: makes you immortal! Display on your wall the first game you win against the PSION. It produces a very nice picture. Make sure you inform the ST of the number of pixels per line.

Remember, rather than suffering from the hyper-tension caused by battling wits with the PSION, change sides occasionally!

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FIRST WORD PLUS

by John Orr

Most ST users are familiar with FIRST WORD, the mouse assisted word processor. An updated version of FIRST WORD, called FIRST WORD PLUS, has been introduced into America and Europe and has all of the facilities that we are used to, with the advantage being able to insert graphics into the text.

Picture files are stored in a compressed format, (GST file extender) to assist in disk space conservation. It will also accept Doodle and Neo files. If you use other drawing packages, or if you just wish to pictorially show part of the desktop in your document, a desktop accessory called Snapshot can be used. As the name implies, snapshot can save all or just a portion of the screen as a picture file which is saved in the GST format.

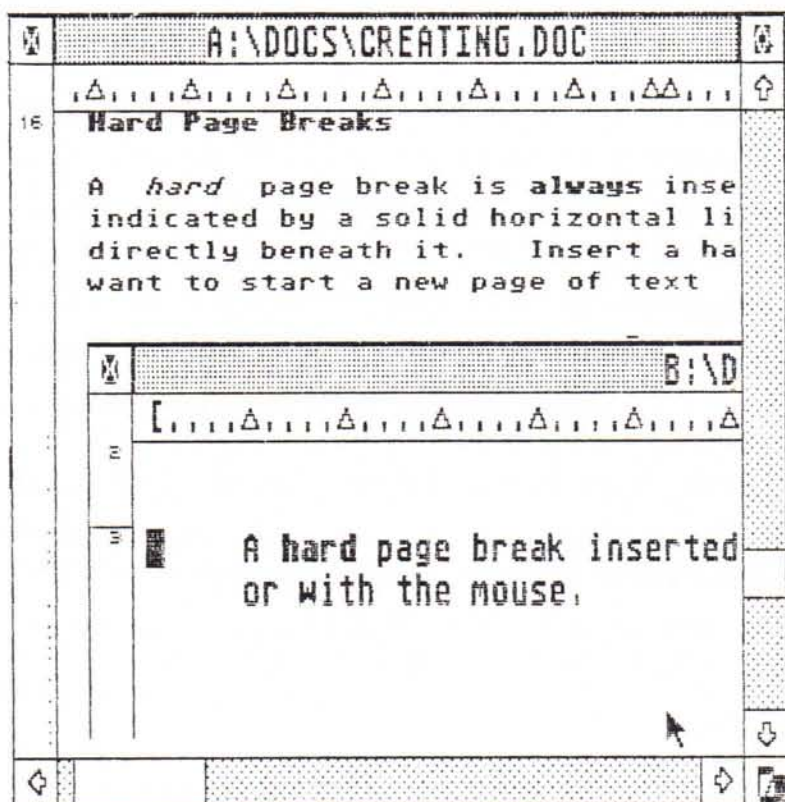
Text entry into FIRST WORD PLUS is done in the same way as the previous versions of FIRST WORD complete with the usual drop-down menus, text style and movement, etc.

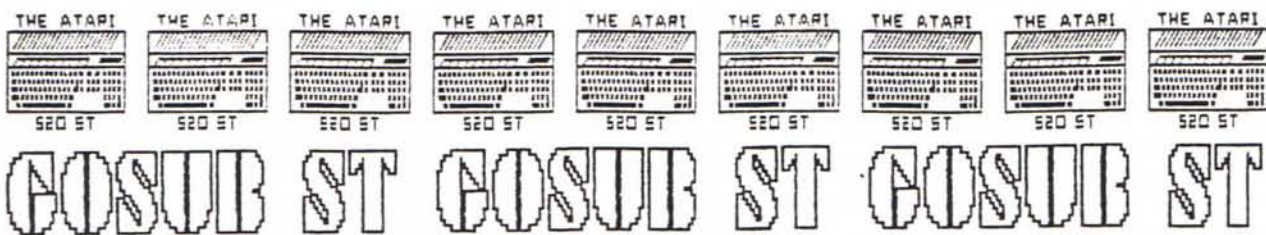
There are two additional drop down menus, the first is a 50,000 word spelling checker. The second is to turn the graphics mode on. Once in this, you are able to load picture files into the document. By holding the left mouse button down, whilst the cursor is over the picture, it can be dragged to any position on the screen.

The saved document will contain the directory names of all the pictures used in the file. It is therefore necessary to have the picture files stored on the same disk as the text.

The printer driver is now contained within the main programme so it is no longer necessary to have a copy of the driver on each text disk. Text and graphics can be printed as they appear on the screen as long as the printer that is used is compatible with an Epson printer in mode 4 format.

The ability of having graphics within text documents would be of great advantage if you are involved in technical documentation, or if you wish to add an artistic touch to letters. I have only been able to see the program run on the monochrome screen and during that time, it has functioned perfectly. FIRST WORD has always been an easy word processor to use. Now with a spelling checker and graphics, it certainly is a PLUS.





NORM PEARCE

HURRAY! ATARI AUSTRALASIA

In a surprise announcement, Atari Corporation has established an Australian subsidiary effective from 4th July 1987 which will be responsible for the marketing and distribution of all products in Australia and the Asia Pacific region.

The subsidiary will be headed up by Mr Nigel Shepherd as Managing Director and all current Mobex/ Atari staff will transfer across from Mobex to the new Company. Mr Shepherd established the rival Commodore Business Machines local subsidiary in 1980 and managed that company until late 1985 before moving to the United States to take up the position as President of Commodore North America

The Adelaide Atari Computer Club and its members applaud Atari's decision and wishes them all the best!

Well, obviously the **BIG** news is what you have already seen above!

In what can only be regarded as the biggest event in Ataridom in Australia, ever to have happened, Jack Tramiel's Atari Corp. has decided to set up an Australian subsidiary. It had to happen of course but I certainly didn't think that it would be just yet.

What does this mean for us?

Well, let's go to the bottom line first - Jack Tramiel has always been a success, still is and probably always will be. In the past year he has set up similar subsidiaries in Spain and Sweden to name 2 and they are now leading Atari sales in their countries.

In fact, throughout Europe Atari is the leading computer at present

It seems to me that JT who has been well aware of Atari's failing in Australasia has decided it's time to make the turn around. He has plenty of cash in the bank, no debts, an excellent range of computers from games machine up to business types, shares that are currently in the \$34US range [remember when they started at \$11.50 in December?], and the stated policy that Atari will be the biggest computer company in the world in a few years.

Will Atari succeed in Australia? **YES!**

Expect things to start hotting up for the Xmas sales period.

Atari Australasia begins trading on July 4th 1987 Mobex Pty Ltd, [who also distributes Casio™ and Aiwa™ products will be a shareholder in the new company. Mr B Slome Chairman of Mobex will join the board of Atari in Australia

Mr Slome said last week that they expected this new arrangement to result in **explosive growth for Atari** [my emphasis].

Perhaps even more surprising though is the person heading the new Atari Australasia.

He is no other than Mr Nigel Shepherd who will be Managing Director [all current Mobex/Atari staff will transfer across to Atari Aust.]

Mr Shepherd was previously Managing Director of Commodore Australia until 1985, when he moved to take up position as President of Commodore North America!

Mr Shepherd arrived in Australia last month to take up the new position with Atari and said **"Our current products are very much state-of-the-art and will be aggressively priced. Atari has a thorough understanding of the technology and consumer markets and we have the capacity to react quickly to any future market changes and opportunities. We have no doubt that Atari will become a major player in the Australian personal computer and video game market place"**.

By taking over the current Mobex distribution network, it does mean that Atari have an organisation already in place and ready to go

Mr Shepherd and senior Atari

Aust personel will be in Adelaide [by the time you read this] and meet with dealers and members of the committee

It is expected that they will give us an outline of their plan.

Final touches are being put to an advertising campaign that places the VCS2600 on TV and the computers in magazines etc.

I believe [but not confirmed yet] that the price of the hard disk for the ST has been reduced to \$1500 [much more reasonable].

Commodore have reacted [?] by trying to sell off the C64 packs at prices down to \$280 and we all know what they have been doing with the Amiga 1000. Atari will have to compete if they want market share. The Amiga 2000 is supposed to be in dealers this week [but at \$2990 for the basic machine and another \$1000 or so to make it IBM compatible who would want it].

Atari will need to get all Atari products into Australia quickly and "aggressively priced".



Little, or I should say, nothing has been happening in the local area. Sales have been disappointing, although as you can see by the adverts, software is beginning to surface. So, look around, try the product at a dealer and then buy it if you like it

Dealers will generally stock software based on the amount of interest shown by users. If you don't go near them and you don't buy it then obviously they will not stock their shelves.

The music vertical market is

about to get a lift from Festival Music [Glenelg]. They have full set-ups with a 520 and 1040 and with all available MIDI software at this time. If you are into music then visit them and talk with Graham

Another new dealer for the ST is Fretted Instruments [76 Sturt St.]

Desktop Publishing moves ahead with 4 font disks and 5 clip-art disks for Publishing Partner and more to come. This program has just arrived in at Paris Radio [Sydney] and also Microbase [WA].

Tests have been conducted in the US recently between PP and Pagemaker [for the Macintosh]. Not surprisingly, PP comes out ahead of Pagemaker. It's been reported that Apple people in Sydney could not believe that PP was not accessing the disk all the time during design and layout [as Pagemaker has to do].

In Personal Computing's February issue the program that only came close to PP, facility for facility was Ventura Publisher.

News has just arrived too that the makers of *Ready, Set, Go!* a desktop publishing program for the Mac and IBM will be porting to the ST before Xmas.

Migraph has launched a new product for the ST called **M/CADD™**. This is a professional engineering graphics design system offering complete integrated solutions from 3D preliminary design through 2D detail drawings. Two independent packages, JIL-Comp and JIL-Mod form the system. Migraph President states "*M/CADD offers features that were previously found only on minicomputers and workstations*".

JIL-Comp the 2D drawing composer

offers multiple command entries; in-stream calculations; on-line documentation; mirror; copy; rotate, scale and 32,000 layers

The 2D package will be available in July and retail for \$299 95US with the 3D package later. It will run on monochrome systems of 1MB or more



Jerry Pournelle of BYTE Magazine, April 1987 awards the Atari 520 and 1040ST as Best Computer Hardware value for 1986. Best Computer Software game he gives to Starglider for the ST!

Various rumours are now starting to come in of the fabled ST workstation. Neil Harris, Director of marketing communications for Atari Corp said "*Basically there are 2 hardware components; a number cruncher and higher-resolution ST. The number cruncher plugs into the DMA port on either the current ST or the enhanced resolution ST.*" Mr Harris continues "*the number cruncher is a 68020-based system with a math co-processor (68881) and memory management unit. It will run UNIX System V software or something close to it. The workstation will use the Atari ST as a front end or as a kind of 'genius terminal'.*"

Reports from the UK claim that Atari is working with transputers. [We published details of Kuma's transputer addition to the ST some time ago in this magazine] Favourite for the job is the new Inmos processor designed for building parallel systems. Metacomco is producing a compiler for OCCAM the language of choice for the Inmos chip. This will also provide an interface for the K-Max board from Kuma. [The new chip is not the T414 as used by Kuma but a new T818 which I believe operates in the 400+ MIPS area].

Atari UK has signed up additional dealers in the form of 50 of WH Smiths largest stores. They have also signed up new distributors giving them a strength of 10 - and a further 500 dealer outlets in the UK.

Atari Australasia have arranged for DAC-Easy the accounting package to be converted to the Australian standards.

According to Bob Gleadow, Atari UK's Managing Director, the Atari ST is outselling the Amiga by a ratio of least five to one. The Director of Precision Software [makers of Superbase Personal ST] says *"In fact the only country where Atari is currently putting up a poor showing is Australia. There Commodore is outselling them by 20 to 1"* [Well I certainly support that - at least it gives Atari Aust. something to aim for]

Sub-Logic Corp. have released a new scenery disk for use with FS2. It covers the east coast of the US featuring rivers, roads, railroads, racetracks and transmitter towers and elevated bridges. More than 130 airports are included - 12 of them military. Scenery disk 7 \$24 95US.

Microdeal UK have released Payroll - a fully GEM based payroll system for automating wages systems for weekly, fortnightly, four-weekly or monthly operations. £199UK.

Metacomco have updated Lattice C [version 3.04] allowing compatibility and easy portability of software from other machine environments. It features much faster program development using the new link/loader called Debug+. This acts as a linker directly in memory and produces programs blazingly fast. £99.95UK or the upgrade for £30UK on production of registration card.

Sagesoft UK have completed Financial Controller - an integrated accounting package featuring sales and purchase order processing, full stock control and integrated payroll. 2 versions single user £299UK and multi user £999UK.

Kuma Computers UK have launched K-Roget a GEM based applications package based on Roget's Thesaurus. It includes 150,000 words and phrases to help authors and speech writers.

New games released are: Boulder Dash Construction Set [from Databyte UK] at £24.95UK. Shuffleboard [from Diamond Games UK] at £19.95UK. Metrocross [from US Gold UK] at £24.95UK (some members saw this when I showed it at the last meeting). Crafton & Xunk [from Ere Info/Infogrammes UK] at £24.95UK - an arcade adventure with incredible detailed graphics. Xevious [from US Gold UK] at £24.95UK (apparently not quite as good as the arcade version). Gauntlet should also be released by the time you read this [from US Gold UK] at £24.95UK. Passengers on the Wind [from Infogrammes UK] at £17 95UK - a graphic adventure on the high seas.

On the US side is Cash Register 1.7 a Point-of-Sale system for small and medium sized retail outlets [from A.N.D. Corp] \$49 95US. Inventory Manager [from Regent Software] is an inventory control system allowing custom reporting and sales projections based on sales histories. The base may contain up to 40,000 items. \$79.95US. Prolog is a full-featured implementation and development tool for AI applications and expert systems [from Rational Visions] at \$39.95US. Word Perfect is due for release in July [from Word Perfect Corp. US].



I understand that *Atari Explorer* magazine is being published now by another company. Not sure who yet though. And while we are talking about that - Sound Serious in Melbourne will be importing small stocks of *Atari Explorer* as soon as they are published. We will have some on order - cost aprox. \$5.50. If you will require a copy please order with Peter Gibson soonest. It will be much quicker than waiting for them to appear on the newstands.

Paris Radio in Sydney have received stocks of software. Some titles are: *Publishing Partner*, *Harrier Strike Mission*, *PrintMaster Plus*, *Colonial Conquest*, *Roadwar 2000*, *Golden Path* and *Silent Service*. Paris will supply to retailers or the public. Contact them direct for prices.

A full implementation of *Small Talk*, a language developed by Allen Fry is running on the Mega ST4. This memory hungry language was only available previously on minicomputers. At a recent show in the US Kodak was showing *Small Talk* on their system - cost in the \$20,000US range. Bet they had red faces seeing it on the ST4 at maybe a tenth of the price!

Compute!'s *Atari ST* magazine for June 1987 has been released. It comprises some 64 pages with a number of programs on the disk of interest; A recoverable RAMdisk, Turbosaver, XREF Debugger, ST Address Book, Word Search program in Basic and others. The usual columns are present plus an article on programming in C

Personal Pascal last issue, I think. This program has been available for the IBM and compatibles for more than a year and is now ready for the ST. It has a syntax-directed editor that is supposed to make syntax errors impossible. A fast interpreter is included. The GEM interface works easily and all graphics are done in windows. There are more than 700 help screens in addition to the manuals \$79 95US.

Yet another Basic! *Real BASIC* is a new interpreter released by Computer Crossware Labs [US]. The language is based on a high-speed interpreter pioneered by the company executing code 20 to 100 times faster than ST Basic yet retaining full compatibility. Machine language modules can be called via goto or gosub to line number/label or run in-line. Features full-screen editor and some of the Micro-Emacs command set. \$69 95US.

Spectrum Holobyte [US] have released *GATO* a WW2 submarine simulation. Features 20 different missions and 10 levels of difficulty. This ST version has forward and aft torpedo tubes, mines and saving/loading capability. \$39.95US.

Another submarine simulation is from Epyx called *Sub Battle Simulator*. The objective is to command a WW2 submarine in either the Atlantic or Pacific and return to base. You choose from 24 US or 36 German missions all based on accurate historical data. Also choose from any of 6 classes of subs. Under \$50US.

I mentioned *Alice: The* Sierra On-Line [US] have

launched *Space Quest* and *King's Quest 3*. Both \$49 95 each US

The range of Abacus technical books, some 14 in all, are available from Microbase in WA or Alliance Computers in Brisbane.

A new range of MIDI software will become available from Compu-Mates [California US]. A successful record producer and musician [with 87 gold and 36 platinum albums] has turned to designing and producing user-friendly MIDI products at affordable prices (less than \$100US). The first is *K3PO*, an editor for a Kawai K3 synthesizer and ST. This can save 17,800 patches or 5,800 user wave forms on disk. Editors for Casio, Korg, Yamaha will follow.

Migraph [US] have additional products for *Easy-Draw*. Font-Pack, Personal Draw Art, Technical Draw Art and 24-pin driver disks are now available together with *Supercharger* allowing you to load scanned images plus all or part of Neo or degas pictures into EZD. Using resolution independent image files, *Supercharger* allows you to preview scanned images on color or mono screens and print out at much higher res.

Stoneage Software [US] who previously released Lewis 1-2-3 and Encrypt now launch *UltraCalc* a desktop calculator with 32-bit precision capable of operating in decimal, simple binary, 1's complement, octal or hexadecimal modes. It can be configured as a standalone or accessory. It also has a wide variety of built-in operations. \$24.95US

York US) comes *DBSense*, a text-based, relational database incorporating its own easy-to-learn application programming language. It can access multiple files, creating for example, a monthly report out of data drawn from separate accounts payable and receivable and income files. 16-digit double precision maths, full text editor make it suitable for a wide variety of applications. A GEM version will follow.

From Mission Softs (California US) comes *Alpha Bytes* their first introduction to the ST. This is an excellent and carefully implemented learning package for children from 2 to 6 years. \$29.95US

ST Sound Digitizer comes from Navarone Industries (California US). This new product can be used for home or professional use and can create music, experiment with new sounds, edit short commercials, create sounds for use in your own programs of experiment with speech recognition. Digitize real world sounds from any source and play back with a MIDI keyboard. It features graphic cut, copy, paste and mixing of sound data and is mouse driven. AD conversion rate allows sampling up to 200,000 samples per second and uses the cartridge port for high speed data transfer. \$139.95US.

At this stage I was going to finish, however more news has just arrived and I feel it might as well be said now.

ST User the English Gollner magazine has had a change of

From Sense Software (New

name to *ST World*. [This is due to another UK magazine with a similar name that we receive]. *ST World* continues to get better and better. It's latest issue [July] is up to 100 glossy pages full of information/in-depth reviews etc. I thoroughly recommend a subscription if you are into the ST and magazines. It will cost £40.00 per year [12 issues] from *ST World*, 10 Theatre Lane, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1SR U K.

A few people have asked about telecommunications packages allowing split-baud rate. There are only 3 such programs available for the ST and they are not [as far as I know] yet in Australia. Perhaps Atari Aust. might look into this? The programs are *K-Comm2*, *FastCom* and *Datacom*. All 3 are fairly equal with a good range of options including Macros/Programmable Functions/Colour & Mono/Store Settings & Numbers/GEM driven/XModem/VT52/VT100/TTY/300-300/1200-75/1200-1200 and other speeds. *Datacom* comes out slightly ahead on features. Prices, *K-Comm2* £49.95/*Fastcom* £43.00 and *Datacom* £44.95UK.

Modula-2 has also been upgraded with new features such as no data size restriction [Global/Local and Array and record size up to 4 Gigabytes], *Longreal* now supports by implementing the 64-bit IEEE floating point standard, Dynamic Heap sizing, Batch Compilation, Constant Declarations can now contain function calls. Program also supports full revision 3 specifications

Exodus, *Ultima 3* is now released overseas.

Broderbund finally WILL be releasing *Print Shop* for the

ST. Expected date is September

Syndromic Music UK have announced their own software label called Soundbits Software First program is *Voice Master* with Editor, Librarian and Randomizer modules for the Yamaha DX21, 27 and 100 Price 49.95UK. Other MIDI products on the way are *Voice Masters* for the Yamaha TX81Z and Roland Alpha Juno 1 & 2

And while we're on music, a rather new and interesting project called *The Composers Desktop Project* This initiative will bring extremely powerful music-computing facilities within the grasp of the average musician or college. It will use cheap but powerful computing and digital HiFi. Project uses the St and the Sony PCM digital recorder as part of a compact sound studio and sound processing laboratory, and mean that music computing software developed on mainframes can be transferred onto this compact system.

Psygnosis have released their newest game called *Barbarian* an animated fantasy graphic adventure. A further program is coming soon from them called *Terropods*.

Computer Concepts UK, well known for their *Fast BASIC* on cartridge will be releasing it on disk at only £39.95UK with a run-time disk an extra £10.00UK. [it will still be available on cart.] CC are also working on a new program called *Calligrapher*, a new text processing system. They state "*Calligrapher* will certainly show up all the current DTP offerings and the WP should establish itself as the standard to follow". It is anticipated to be on cartridge however may finally come on disk.

Haba Systems were one of the first companies in the US to produce software for the ST. Their UK off-shoot is now further developing products with their latest called *Signum*. This is an impressive, and professional document processor with unheard of features and is well suited to technical and professional fields. It offers a true WYSIWYG environment, has special fonts and printer drivers and true proportional spacing on screen and output [and with any font]. Up to 7 fonts per document are permitted. It is capable of producing scientific formulae [the program was written by a German mathematician]. GEM windows have not been utilised as they were not good enough for *Signum* but pull-down menus, dialog boxes and alerts are used in full. Headers, footers, justification, pagination and search & replace are implemented. Positional control to 1/54th of an inch horizontally and 1/90th of an inch vertically is very accurate! 2 font editors are also supplied [9 and 24 pin] and includes a technical font as standard.

Starglider will be appearing in the arcades in the future as it has been licensed to Bally/Sente.

Other new software released, particularly in the UK and some of it specialised are:-
The Director [by Malvern Software UK] for the video hire vertical market suitable for small to medium sized libraries up to 400 transactions per day. Written in C and uses GEM and statistics can be exported to K-Graph [by Kuma].
STOIC [by Brute Force Microsystems Scotland] plugs into the cartridge port with no internal modification to the ST but gives the user full

control of 24 TTL output lines and 16 TTL input lines. A total of 8 boards can be connected to one ST thereby giving a maximum of 192 outputs and 128 inputs. Possible applications include AtoD, DtoA converters, voice recognition, security systems, model railway layouts etc etc. *Stoic* stands for ST OutputInput Card, and costs £78.25UK. *Execon Accounts* [by Execon Business Software UK] is the first of a set of business packages which will all integrate to form a comprehensive accounting, inventory control and invoicing system. *Stationfall* is the latest Infocom [by Activision] adventure written by Steve Meretzky and is the sequel to *Planetfall*. *Pattern Design System* [by Robinson Associates/Bentley Engineering UK] is a new low-cost system for the design of knitting patterns. This now enables smaller design studios to take advantage of a modern computer techniques. Uses GEM and WYSIWYG Patterns can be viewed either in a 32 X 6 or 256 X 84 window. Output is via Canon PWJ1080 colour inkjet printer. *Hollywood Poker* [by Diamond Software via Robtek UK] is their first release for the ST and is a digitised strip-poker program featuring Miss Germany 1987.

Wow, I've got to stop or the Editor will kill me [so will the President].

The University of Sussex has over 150 ST's on campus and is buying more all the time.

SAM is the *Silicon Animation Machine* [by Silicon Solutions UK], which is a real-time digitizer grabbing a frame in 1/60 of a second and grabs 25 frames every second and stores in memory. £249.95UK.

OK OK till next month.



1987 CEBIT REPORT

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What is CeBIT? The CEBIT fair at Hanover supposedly is the world's largest show in bureau and information electronics. CEBIT stands for: Computer, Electronics, Bureau, Information and Telecommunication. On an area of more than 205,000 square meters in 12 halls more than 2200 firms showed their products.

HARDWARE

ATARI presented itself in its newly adopted white-and-blue look and on 50 1040s the software-houses presented their new products. Before looking at the software I was pulled to the new MEGA-STs and that experience was great. The design was appealing and the keyboard a lot better than my 1040's. The MEGAs won't hit the stores before May or even June due to a slight timing-problem with the shifter-chip. This error results in small vertical black lines on the display. The delay in the MEGAs will probably also affect the PC since ATARI said they would only put out the PC after the MEGAs to show their preferences, but with Jack Tramiel one can never be certain.

The last all new product was the laser printer. Connected to one of the MEGAs it was turning out page after page. The quality was as can be expected from such a machine. The printer emulates a Diablo 630 and supports GDOS. According to a German ATARI-representative they are working on post-script.

Naturally ATARI was not the only to show new products. On the hardware side. There was also HEISE, a German publishing-house, that showed its new version of the real-time language PEARL/RTOS system which was developed at Hanover University. It was simultaneously showing a graphic (a more sophisticated version of the only too-well-known jumping-ball) and controlling a robot that balanced a glass of water.

BASIS-0, who formerly built APPLE compatibles, showed an interesting new integrated scanner-printer/plotter and telecopier. Within 4 minutes it is possible to send or receive a letter in handwriting or with graphics on any public or private telephone. The device incorporates an acoustic coupler and can be run on rechargeable batteries. The resolution is 4096 pixels per line and 1125 lines per page.

PRINT-TECHNIK presented its 3rd-generation digitizers. Their new Realtizer digitizes a picture with up to 16 gray-levels in less than one second. It now plugs into the ROM-port. Its big brother, the PRO 87, digitizes 1024 pixels in 512 lines and 128 gray-levels. Both digitizers come with a toolbox-software and the PRO 87 also includes the necessary hardware for real-color images. PRINT-TECHNIK also offers a Genlock-interface for the ST.

Other products are a Meteosat weather satellite receiver, a sound digitizer and a memory-oscilloscope. GTI, a Berlin-based society, presented a VMEbus-interface that plugs into the DMA-port and includes a full bus-arbitration-logic and supports interrupts. The DMA-port is pulled through so that a hard-disk can still be used. Another bus that opens your ATARI is produced by RHOTRON. It is plugged onto the CPU and has eight slots. Since installing the bus voids the warranty RHOTRON also offers a PC-like case in which the ST and the bus and a stronger power supply are incorporated.

Rhotron offers several cards to fill the slots, from 2-Meg RAM to multifunction-cards they have just about everything, or how about a math-coprocessor?

A barcode-reader can be obtained from CDS in Freiburg/Rhine valley. Barcodes invade our lives, they tell you what is in a specific product, which

film you just rented and with such a reader you can find out yourself. LINDY, a maker of printer-cables and other computer add-ons also presented an oscilloscope. It can be used as a sound-sampler or as a digital oscilloscope.

The last interesting hardware I wish to present was not on the show, but since Desktop Publishing is becoming more and more important, I feel it should be mentioned.

LANGUAGES AND BUSINESS SOFTWARE

There was very interesting software for the Atari at CEBIT '87 too. I tried to look for things that haven't (yet) reached the other side of the Atlantic. Let's start with new languages. Although there are many already, even more languages are offered for the ST. Some people even say that there is no other computer with more different languages available -- languages not only for developers.

Again, HEIM-Verlag has something for us. It is a powerful version of PROLOG that also supports GEM. The package consists of a compiler/interpreter system with around 140 functions. It is called SALIX-PROLOG and costs around \$120.

More sophisticated is MProlog by Berlin-based Epsilon. MProlog is also available on other computers like VAX, Macintosh, IBM etc. It costs around \$500(?), and is designed for professional use.

SMALLTALK-80 in its version 2.1, which has been ported to the ST by a group from Dortmund-university, is an object-oriented language which means that all is done by sending messages between objects.

Another language with an unusual concept is FORTH. LMI put out its FORTH-83 compatible version for the ST. This version is also compatible with other LMI-Forths for other computers. Alas, it does not support GEM, but it at least supports the TOS functions.

A language that becomes more and more interesting for the hobbyist is MODULA-2. MEGAMAX is turning out its version and probably will be a worthy competitor against TDI.

Not only new languages were shown. BASIC in new and more powerful versions enjoys a glorious revival. Three different BASIC systems were shown.

First there was GfA who showed version 2.0 of their interpreter and the almost final version 1.71 of their compiler. Frank Ostrowski, the author of GfA-BASIC is now busy writing a GfA-macro-assembler, lets wait and see. GfA will be represented in the US by MICHTRON.

The second BASIC shown was OMIKRON-BASIC which comes on a plug-in board for the ROM-port. It is even faster than GfA-BASIC in most functions, it calculates up to 19 decimals, supports matrices and a C-standard GEM-interface. It is MBASIC-compatible and there only is one problem. By the time it was published, most people had already bought GfA-BASIC.

The third newcomer has another nice feature. True-BASIC is available for ATARI, IBM, AMIGA and MAC and between these it is fully portable. Like OMIKRON it offers matrices and it supports the full new ANSI-standard. It also has a special library for 3-D graphics.

BUSINESS

There were quite a few applications presented, but most programs were dedicated to the German market with special attention to the German tax-system and other uniquely German necessities. Among those that are useful for any businessman was LOGISTIX, an integrated software-package which includes a

spreadsheet, database, timeplanner and graphics. The demonstration was quite impressive, and the product seems very capable, but I'm not an expert in spreadsheets.

dB-MAN was presented in a German version which still has some of the old bugs, of which the most prominent is failure to turn off the blinking cursor upon exiting. But apart from this dB-MAN is a very powerful piece of software and especially the incorporated programming-language with its abundance of commands and functions hardly leaves any wishes.

Another database was presented by ATARI itself. ADIMENS-ST is fully GEM-integrated (well almost), extremely fast, powerful and a high-quality product. To bad it still lacks a programming language, which for me as a developer is indispensable. ATARI said it is underway, though, and should be available by July.

A real goody was a piece of integrated software which was presented by a Yugoslavian firm. Its name is 'STEVE' and it is the most flexible spreadsheet I've seen, yet. One can do everything and nothing with it. It can be used as a spread-sheet naturally, a database, text-editor, graphic editor and mailing list facility. It allows user-definable function keys, two keyboard-tables, several fonts, abbreviations and dictionary in the text-editor and more. The program will retail in Germany for around DM 250, which is about \$110, but that was the maximum price.

PROCESSORS, TOOLS & MODEM SOFTWARE

CEBIT '87 had plenty of Atari word processors to offer. DATA-Becker (their products are sold by ABACUS in the US) presented their new BECKER-text, the new version of TEXTOMAT ST (TEXTPRO). There are no more control-codes in the text (WYSIWYG) and it features an indexing function as well as an automatic table of contents. Graphics can be included and computation and tables are incorporated. Most functions can be reached by either the mouse or a key combination. It still has the C-Source option and now offers different fonts.

Again, ATARI offered an alternative to the just described program. I'm talking about the finally released '1st Word Plus'. This program cures most of the errors and oddities of the original 1st Word and adds some nice new features as well. It is going to be really difficult to make a choice between 1st Word Plus and BECKER-text since both have nice features the competitor does not have and as well there are still wishes I have for both.

A third text-editor which was not on the show, but has caused a lot of noise is SIGNUM¹ which is retailed by Application Systems in Heidelberg. SIGNUM¹ stands somewhere between a word-processor and a Desktop Publishing system. It allows up to seven fonts of 128 characters each at the same time. A character can be just about everything and an editor to create new character-sets is included. SIGNUM¹ offers macros and very powerful placing utilities. A reviewer called it a calligraphy-system. (Calligraphy is the art of embellishing writing).

TOOLS

G-DATA, based in Dusseldorf, has been known over here for its quality utility software. They have improved some of their old programs and added new ones including a program to make a Hard disk capable of auto-booting and several programs to make backups of a hard disk which has some nice features including data-compression, and file size of more than disk size.

The most powerful tool for disk-repair and editing is T.L.D.U. by FOCUS. This firm has made disk-monitors for years. T.L.D.U is fully programmable and the disk comes with some example-macros which offer a good way to learn the necessary commands. The programming language is very C-like. The current release does not read or write some copy-protected disks, but an update has

been promised for June. T.L.D.U. also includes a disassembler and an extensive manual.

KUMA presented its late releases of K- SWITCH and K-RESOURCE.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Finally there is some movement in the German mailbox and telecommunication community. Some good programs were at the show. DELUXE-Term supports GEM and is somewhat equal in comfort to FLASH, but it is possible to use 1200/75 baud.

Another program, again offered by ATARI themselves, is 1st Terminal, that is completely GEM-based in conjunction with PROFIBOX, an excellent mailbox program. It is even possible to select from the PROFIBOX menus using your mouse when utilizing 1st Terminal. Both programs, the box and the terminal program have been written by Brain-Works from Rosenheim in Bavaria.

CAD GRAPHICS & MIDI SOFTWARE

Harm-Bastian (HABA), which resides in Hamburg, has released its HABACAD-PL layout program. The program addresses only professional hardware-developers and the price of DM3000 (\$1200) seems rather hefty. No GEM support, but powerful routing routines.

Quite a bit less expensive and for different customers is CAMPUS V 1.1. This program is fully GEM-integrated and has made quite some enhancements to GEM. It is quick and definitely a very usable drawing tool. Its price of DM700 (\$330) may seem high, but it is really worth it.

On the lower end of the price scale is STAD a drawing-program for 2-D and 3-D objects. There are up to 15 2-D pages and an extra 3-D part. STAD offers the usual and some extra functions including sending/receiving via the serial port. The 3-D part is object-oriented like in EASYDRAW, the 2-D part is not. However, it is possible to interchange data between the parts, thus allowing for a 2-D object-library. STAD also includes animation and 'realtime rotation'. STAD retails for DM 179.- (\$90).

Only for color monitors are the two Director programs ART DIRECTOR and FILM DIRECTOR by ANDROMEDA. This Hungarian firm has always been good for terrific programs and these two programs are among their best. The ART DIRECTOR is a drawing and painting program, but it offers most unusual features and is very flexible. The FILM DIRECTOR could be described as a slide-show program. But it is much more. Objects that have been created using the ART DIRECTOR are put together in several thousand frames, a background and music can be added and you have made your first animation-picture. If you have the breath, it can take up to three hours. The directors import all kind of other graphic formats and when you add a video-digitizer there is no limit to your imagination.

SOUND

Talking of music. There are some powerful new programs that allow even the non-musician to create nice melodies and sound-effects.

MUSIX 32, already in an enhanced version, allows programmers to add sound and music to their programs, which is played in background and interrupt-driven.

Besides putting in the score it is possible to define the dynamics, the sound-wave and to perform transformations. Once you are done you can make a printout and incorporate the music in any C-, Pascal, or GfA- program. Other languages can also be used. MUSIX 32 has been created by the famous team of TOMMY SOFTWARE.

If you are interested in synthesizers and own an ATARI you won't get

around STEINBERG. This firm has produced software and hardware already in the days of Commodore 64, but their ATARI programs and add-ons are first-rate. They offer everything from a sequencer (TWENTY-FOUR 2.0) to score-printing programs (MASTERSCORE), editing kits (pro16+) and their SOUND WORKS series, powerful tools for several synthesizers which help in designing new sounds, editing and mixing samples and much more.

GAMES

Although CEBIT is dedicated more to the office than to leisure there were some games. MICRODEAL showed among more serious pieces of software their KARATE-KID II and ELECTRONIC POOL programs. TOMMY SOFTWARE showed their products TRASHHEAP and DIZZY WIZARD which seemed quite interesting.

FINISHING UP

A program I could not classify, but which I found a very appealing possibility to learn is 'SKYLOT plus'. Just about anything that has to do with astronomy is in this program. Calculate eclipses, conjunctions, trails of selected comets or planets and stars. Two databases for the stars, one with 610 and one with 15,383 stars are integrated. It is possible to find out how the night-sky above your house looks like, by putting in your geographical position. This program has much more possibilities. It retails for DM 200,- (\$100).

I know that many things were described much too superficially, but this report was intended to give you an idea of what is happening in ATARI's stronghold. ATARI has sold over 120,000 STs (all models) in Germany alone. ATARI Germany has made up for almost 30% of ATARI's sales in 1986.



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<i>K-Spread</i>	<i>DB Master One</i>	<i>Little Computer People</i>
<i>Publishing Partner</i>		

Call in and see MIKE now

MINUTESMeeting - 1st June 1987

- 7.45 Meeting opens. President's address welcoming visitors, members and guests. The minutes for the last three meetings are in the latest issue of Feedback.

Most importantly we have had a volunteer to be editor of Feedback. RAEWYN PETERSSON has agreed to do the job. She will still need everybody's help in the supplying of articles, listings etc. As the magazine will be produced using 1st Word, those of you with ST's can give Brian Petersson your contributions on disk. The 8-bit people will need to download theirs via a modem to Brian, or give the article to either the president in the south, or Peter Gibson in the north to download for you. (This procedure has not been tried yet, so it may take a while to set up properly.) So if you have an article to submit or are thinking about writing one, GET TO IT, AND DO IT !!

The Atari scene IS improving around Adelaide. ST's are selling better and machines are reappearing at various stores. If you want a program or piece of equipment, go and ask them for it and show the retailers that there are still Atari enthusiasts out there. The Computer Centre is still giving up to 5% discount to financial club members (a current membership card must be produced).

The ST SIG had a good turnout at Modbury for its first meeting; we even set up an 8-bit machine in the corner for those who felt so inclined. Remember the mid-month meeting will be held there again this month.

Magazines and Club disks are available again tonight; Page 6, Atari User, Antic, and Analog get yours tonight !! PR Officer - Mobex have assured us that advertising WILL be run soon. Apparently it will be MASSIVE, or so they say! We will wait and see. Their top people are at the moment over in the USA for the opening of the CES show.

Various dealers have a special offer on ST's - \$200 off the 520ST, or \$400 off the 1040ST with the trade-in of any OLD office equipment (a pencil perhaps?).

We have a visitor tonight PETER LEACH from RGB Computers who just by chance happens to sell Atari's!! His firm also sells other interesting things; modems for only \$160 etc. See him for more information.

Clay Turner's machine language course will continue tonight.

Committee meeting next Monday 8th June, at the President's house.

8.05 General Business.

Brian Peterson has 8 people interested in his DS/DD disk drive modification. He has had confirmation that the drives have been shipped and will be arriving soon. His other projects are getting closer to finalization. Stay tuned for information.

An ST owner said he bought his ST in Germany and has some ST PD disks and German language magazines if anybody is interested. In Germany many firms are buying ST's for both their own use and for the use of their employees.

It appears that there was no PC (IBM/IBM Compatibles) revolution so when the Atari ST became available, EVERYBODY went out and bought one!! Hence

there popularity there.

We have some members hardware/software for sale tonight. Have a browse, there may be just what you wanted, at bargain prices. Remember if you have items for sale why not put an advertisement in our club magazine, its FREE to members.

8.15 At this time the formal meeting adjourned. Tea and Coffee available again tonight. P.Gibson, Secretary

STOP THE PRESS *ATARI AUSTRALIA REPORT*

Norm Pearce, Public Relations Officer

Last night, Wednesday, 1 July, some members of your Committee met with Atari Australasia. Present were the Managing Director, Mr Nigel Shepherd, Atari Sales support, Mr Ray Lee and Tony Willmott, local Atari Rep. Their Sales and Marketing Manager Ms Gillian Franklin was, regrettably, ill. Also present were the dealers and staff of Adelaide stores.

Mr Shepherd addressed the meeting by giving us his background details and how he came to be the MD of Atari Aust. This was most informative. As you will have read elsewhere, he was previously the MD of Commodore Aust, and then President of Commodore Canada, North and South America.

A public relations video was then screened, showing Atari's successful re-entry into the market place under Mr Jack Tramiel. A question and answer session followed. Atari's pricing structure in Australia, will generally be twice the US recommended price; for example an item selling for \$US100, can be expected to sell in Australia for \$Aust200.

Following are the present Australian prices for stock. Please note however, that these prices may change without further notification. No other prices are yet available on the new products still to arrive. The Mega's and PC are expected to be on the market during September.

VCS2600 system reduced to \$99.
Atari Joystick \$14.95.
Atari Proline Joystick \$24.95.
Paddle Controllers \$29.95.
Various cartridges start from \$19.95.

Atari 130XE Starter Pack \$399.
(this includes 128K computer, Datasette, 2 joysticks and 3 software packages).

XC11 Program Recorder \$79.
130XE (128K) Computer \$299.
XMM801 DotMatrix Printer \$399.

520ST (512K) Computer plus
360K Disk Drive \$999.

520STM (512K) Computer plus
360K DD plus Mono Monitor \$1495.

520STC (512K) Computer plus

360K DD plus Colour Monitor \$1795.

1040STM (1MB) Computer inc 720K
DD plus Mono Monitor \$2095.

1040STC (1MB) Computer inc 720K
DD plus Colour Monitor \$2395.

1040ST (1MB) Computer inc 720K DD
\$1699 (no monitor).

SH324 20MB Hard Disk \$1499.

SMM804 DotMatrix Printer \$499.

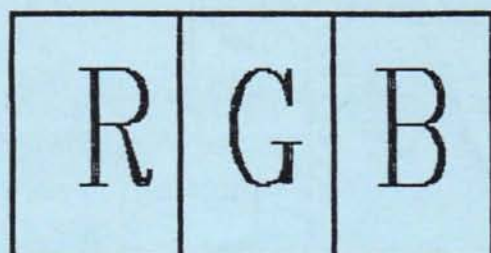
SC124MM Mono Monitor \$549.

SC1224CM Colour monitor \$799.

SF314DD 720K DiskDrive \$595.

SF354DD 360K DiskDrive \$395.

As a final note the ESTIMATED price of the Atari Desktop Publishing System, which will be the MegaST2, SLM804 Laser Printer and DTP program is \$6000.



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- * THOMPSON HI-RES TTL
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Hybrid Arts™ MidiTrack ST PRO with SMPTE 60 tracks, with SMPTE box and patch librarian	\$1,200

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Dr T™ DX Heaven	\$225
Hybrid Arts™ DX Editor	\$350
Hybrid Arts™ DX-ANDROID™	\$500
Dr T™ 4 Operator Deluxe Editor Supports Yamaha FB-01, DX-27, DX-21, DX-100, TX-81Z	\$225
Dr T™ CZ Patch Editor	\$200
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